2951

Panchayati Raj

APRIL 1963

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL, ... CENTRE ... T. KALLUPATTI
24 APR 1963

A contingent of Block Organisers of Prantiya Raksha Dal in Uttar Pradesh, being trained in marching. After 9 months' training they will organise Village Volunteer Force in their respective Blocks.

Training with rifles

Growing vegetables in kitchen gardens through Yuvak Mangal Dals

TRAINING P.R.D. MEMBERS

Learning Asans *for poise and strength*

Participating in a Cultural Show

Vol. IV APRIL 1963 No. 1

CHAITRA–1885

CONTENTS

LETTER 1

VILLAGE VOLUNTEER FORCE IN U. P.—*Vishnu Dutt* .. 2

FROM THE CHOWPAL .. 6

ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF STATE MINISTERS OF CO-OPERATION 8

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS .. 11

NATIONAL DEBATES ON PANCHAYATI RAJ AND CO-OPERATION 12

FROM THE CENTRE .. 15

Editor : VISHNU DUTT

(Asstt. Editor : Publications Division)

BUSINESS NOTICE

Single Copy : 15 nP.

Annual : Rs. 1·25

All enquiries regarding agency and rates of subscription and advertisements may be addressed to the Publications Division, Old Secretariat, Delhi-6. Editorial correspondence may be addressed to the Editor, *Panchayati Raj*, Ministry of Community Development & Cooperation, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi.

LETTER

Making V. V. F. A Success

Dear Friend,

You must be aware of the new scheme of Village Volunteer Force and Defence Labour Bank, having been launched recently. Some people have criticised this as being the latest fad of the Government and that it is doomed to failure. Another section holds the view that it is the best means to mobilise the huge energies of the rural masses for purposes of defence as well as development. According to them, it is the logical extension of Panchayati Raj in order to involve an ever-widening circle of people in the national efforts.

It was felt that a few representatives of the Panchayat,—the duly elected body of the village were by themselves incompetent to reach the whole body of men living in the village, to inspire them to a new faith and a new purpose ultimately leading them to a collective action. Mere passing of a resolution or the fixing of targets of production in the Village Production Plan was not just enough. Something more was needed. It was the willing and active co-operation of all the adults of the village in the common cause. Thus from Gram Panchayat to Gram Sabha was the new trend flowing from the inexorable logic of the demands made by the present national emergency.

One cannot reach all the families and individuals all at once. There must be a band of devoted workers who are ready to play their part whenever required. The V.V.F. provides the nucleus for such workers who might take up any of the three activities *i.e.* Production, Civil Defence and Mass Education, according to their choice. Between themselves, they will divide the families in the village for working in an intensive manner. They will be their self-appointed friends and guides. They will lead them in any community effort whenever organised in the village. Personal contact, discussion and persuasion have to be their technique and not force or compulsion in any way. This willing participation by the people constitutes the essence of democracy.

It has been argued, however, that if the members of the V.V.F. do not play their assigned role properly, the scheme will not tick. How to ensure its proper working? This is a practical problem. Difficulty was experienced in inspiring and activising even the inactive panches upon whom some duties and responsibilities had been cast at least statutorily. But what would be the binding force on a group of volunteers to make them act as they should? The obvious reply is that it is nothing but a sense of patriotism or enlightened spirit of selfless service on their part. But this is easier

(*Continued on page* 16)

VILLAGE VOLUNTEER FORCE IN U.P.

VISHNU DUTT

U.P. HAS taken to Village Volunteer Force as duck takes to water. The scheme which came in the wake of the present National Emergency is designed to broaden and strengthen the Panchayati Raj institutions as well as to mobilise the surplus voluntary labour of the rural masses. The U.P. State has been running Prantiya Raksha Dal,—an organisation with similar objectives and programme for the last fifteen years. It was, therefore, but natural that as soon as the new scheme came, it was made a part and parcel of the P.R.D.

I recently toured Uttar Pradesh for five days during the last month and studied the working of the Village Volunteer Force at various levels,—state, district, block and village. In addition to my two days' stay at the State Headquarter at Lucknow, I was able to spend some time at the district headquarters at Allahabad and Fatehpur. I also visited the block headquarters Hasva and the Gram Sevak Training Centres at Bakshi-ka-Talab and Jhusi. The villages visited were Bhainsamau, one of the five villages attached to Bakshi-ka-Talab Training Centre and Andavan,—a village attached to Gram Sevak Training Centre, Jhusi. Chak Rasulabad and Sudnipur Kalan interior villages were also visited by me.

SIMILARITY IN APPROACH

I was struck by the similarity in the approach and objectives of the two. As in the case of Village Volunteer Force, it is the volunteers at the village level who constitute the mainstay of Prantiya Raksha Dal as well. The latter has forged through a process of trial and error over the long course of its existence the same threefold objectives of Civil Defence, Production and Mass Education as are held by the Village Volunteer Force. It has weathered many a storm and has emerged stronger and more vital every time. It has undergone three distinct phases of development, each corresponding to one of the three aspects.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The P.R.D. came into existence as a result of a legislative measure passed by the State Assembly in 1948. To start with, it was meant to serve as a home-guard and its main function was to help maintain law and order and to look after the watch and ward of the cities as well as the rural areas. It supplemented the efforts of the police. It acquitted itself creditably in this limited objective. Several of its volunteers have a gallant record of bravery against notorious dacoits. The force as a whole, made a mark by helping to maintain peaceful conditions. It also took part in shramdan now and then. A notable achievement was the clearance of 8,000 acres of jungle infested with snakes and scorpions near Rahimabad in which 18,000 volunteers participated. This area now forms a Government farm. This period corresponds to the Civil Defence aspect.

Since 1952 onward when the C.D. programme was launched in the country, the P.R.D. came in the fore-front of shramdan movement and helped considerably in mobilising people's participation in works of community benefit. Its members received special training in the use of implements varying from a spade to the bulldozer used during shramdan campaign. It did commendable work in the field of soil-erosion and afforestation during 1953, 1954 and 1955 when 900 acres, 4,500 acres and 4,500 acres of land respectively were brought under afforestation. A glimpse of the shramdan work can be had from the value of the work done during the years 1957-58, 1958-59 and 1959-60 which is of the order of Rs. 6,44,000, Rs. 22,50,000 and Rs. 27,00,000 respectively. This may be termed as the development period.

From 1954 onwards, the work of youth welfare was also entrusted to it. The work of Yuvak Mangal Dal has made a remarkable progress in Uttar Pradesh. The youth

in the villages have taken up several economic projects such as kitchen-gardening, calf-rearing and goat-rearing. As they grow up, they would prove themselves to be model farmers carrying on agriculture and animal husbandry on improved and scientific lines. They are developing a great keenness for camps, sports and cultural programmes. Thanks to the training in physical fitness, sense of duty and discipline imparted to them by P.R.D., they are being well-equipped to assume leadership. Some of them have already assumed leadership in Gram Sabha and Kshetra Samitis. In this way, the P.R.D. came to be associated with the work of social education, of mobilizing village youth and that of dissemination of information which is the third objective of the Village Volunteer Force.

An interior of a barrack in which the trainees have spread their beddings on the floor. All things are kept in a neat and tidy manner.

When the Prime Minister gave the clarion call for organising the Village Volunteer Force throughout the country, Uttar Pradesh had simply to switch over the vast organisation of Prantiya Raksha Dal to function as Village Volunteer Force which in effect it was already doing. What it now needed to do was some strengthening of the organisational set-up and a little reorientation of the programme. Shramdan was now sought to be concentrated on productive works only such as digging of field channels, soil conservation, tank-excavation, afforestation etc.

ORGANISATION AND TRAINING

Shri Kamla Mishra

It was a fairly extensive organisation already. Headed by a Commandant General, an I.P.S. officer, a Commandant, another I.P.S. Officer and an Assistant Commandant, it had got one District Organiser in each District and one Block Organiser in each Block. It is now proposed to strengthen the existing staff by providing one Assistant District Organiser at the District level and one more Block Organiser at the Block level. The strength of the official part of the organisation would thus be about 1,500. I saw 500 newly-recruited Block Organisers receiving an intensive 9 months' training at the State headquarter. They are in addition to about 800 Block Organisers already functioning in the State. They will work as trainers of the Halqa Sardars at thana level and Dalpatis at the village level. At present, there are about 3,000 trained Dalpatis already stationed in the villages. About 16,500 Dalpatis and Halqa Sardars are undergoing 15 days' training in camps at District Headquarters. Their training will be completed by the end of March. The remaining 54,000 Dalpatis will also have completed their training by the end of 15th June, 1963. Each of the 72,000 Gram Sabhas is expected to have at least 5 groups, each consisting of ten Village Volunteers under one group leader. Thus in all there would be at least 3½ million village volunteers functioning throughout the State. They will all be trained by the Dalpatis and Halqa Sardars in

Shri Tribhuvan Rai

course of time at almost no cost to the State Government. Some of the panchayats have offered even to provide uniforms for the volunteers. But for the trained and experienced staff of the Prantiya Raksha Dal already available it would have been impossible to arrange the training of such vast numbers of volunteers in such a short period.

The training imparted to the District Organisers and Block Organisers at the P.R.D. State Headquarters at Lucknow is being conducted on very economic lines. Improvised barracks serve as the school rooms and hostel. There are even no cots for the boys who sleep on the floor. The kitchen, latrine and bathrooms are all improvised. The whole atmosphere is rural and the lads from villages do not mind these inconveniences. I found the young recruits to be quite cheerful and contented with their lot. Some of them are graduates and even M.As. I met 22 year old Kamla Mishra who hails from a village in Azam Garh District. He is an M.A. and had come for training as Block Organiser. On my asking him why he had joined the P.R.D., he replied, "I am the son of a farmer. I like to do service in the village. In the present emergency, this is the best service that I can do to my country unless I am able to join the Army." Tribhuvan Rai,—a law graduate was equally enthusiastic. I was told he had been promoted from the voluntary post of Halqa Sardar which he held for some years. He was only a matriculate when he joined the P.R.D. in a voluntary capacity.

The emphasis during training has been rightly placed on physical training which includes parade, rifle-shooting, sports etc. This inculcates in them a sense of duty and discipline which as trainers of Dalpatis and Halqa Sardars, they are required to infuse in the volunteers further down. Their training syllabus includes subjects like improved agriculture, Yuvak Mangal Dal and cultural programmes. The schemes of Village Volunteer Force and Defence Labour Bank have also been added recently. The State Government would be well-advised to spend some more money on providing the basic amenities such as a good library and a swimming pool for the benefit of the trainees.

AN OBJECT LESSON

The P.R.D. has the distinction of not only being the largest army of volunteers (nearly 3.5 million) but the best organised and most experienced in the field of welfare and development works. It offers the most effective reply to those critics who consider that the Village Volunteer Force scheme is no more than a mere fad and that it is doomed to failure. It shows that an army of volunteers can be effectively mobilised through the official agency. Its organisational set-up, pattern of working and the quality of workers may well serve to be an object lesson to other States. Here are some of the salient features :

It is noteworthy that the P.R.D. came into existence as a result of an Act passed by the State Assembly in 1948. The volunteers when called on duty are to all intents and purposes Government Servants with specific duties and obligations. The legal sanction coupled with the semi-military training imparted to the volunteers ensure sense of duty and discipline on their part which is the '*sine qua non*' of success.

The operation of the scheme of Defence Labour Bank has been facilitated because of the provision of Section 19A of the U.P. Panchayat Act, 1947 according to which every Gram Sabha can pass a resolution by two-third majority calling upon all its adult members to give free labour for a specified number of days. Thus a few unwilling reactionaries in the village cannot hold up the implementation of the scheme.

The greatest lacuna from which a volunteer army may suffer is that of lack of sense of duty and discipline. In the case of P.R.D., sufficient care has been taken to ward off this danger with the help of legislative sanction and training on semi-military pattern. However, it does not follow that it is a militarised or a regimented organisation. It commands influence and popularity amongst the masses by virtue of the voluntary and selfless service rendered by it. Its volunteers dressed in Khaki, inspire love and confidence.

They are looked upon as very much different from a soldier or a police officer. I was informed how the P.R.D. had organised a large number of camps of its volunteers lasting from three to seven days and even more without involving the Government to any expenditure. The number of volunteers attending these camps had varied from 200 to 1,000. The slogan then given to the members was: "*Apna Apna Sattu; Apna Apna Pisan; Bhare Chalo Nav Jawan*" i.e. "bring your own food and let the youth forge ahead." I saw for myself that there was considerable enthusiasm amongst the villagers for imparting training to the village volunteers at the hands of the P.R.D. A number of Gram Sabhas had offered even to supply uniforms to the volunteers at their own cost.

MAN-MAKING PROGRAMME

There is complete integration of youth welfare work with the P.R.D. The Commandant P.R.D. is also the Director, Youth Welfare. The District Organiser P.R.D. is also the District Youth Welfare Officer and the Block Organiser of P.R.D. works as Asstt. Development Officer (Youth Welfare). He has also assumed the role of Social Education Officer. The integration of youth welfare work with the P.R.D. has given to the organisation a tremendous source of strength and energy. The involvement of the youth in physical training programmes, development activities and cultural programmes, has paved the way for evolving well-disciplined and cultured citizens with a progressive outlook. The trained youth (between 12 to 25 years) provide a good nursery for future village leadership. Their further training as members of the V.V.F. will make them still more useful citizens of the country. The Bal Mangal Dal (covering children between 6 to 12 years) has also been linked to the Yuvak Mangal Dal under the P.R.D. The children from their very early age, lend themselves to a healthy moulding of their character and personality. Thus the Bal Mangal Dal, Yuvak Mangal Dal and V.V.F. taken as a whole, provide a complete training,—physical, social and cultural for a life-time. That is why the P.R.D. is known for its man-making programme.

No organisation however perfect it may be, can succeed by itself in moulding and influencing the mind and character of a human being. For a man-making programme, it is the quality and character of the people working in the organisation that plays the decisive role. Fortunately, the P.R.D. has been able to attract to itself a large number of selfless and patriotic workers who have proved their worth during the freedom struggle. The large measure of success achieved by the P.R.D. is in no small measure attributable to the spirit of dedicated service rendered by these workers.

There has been thorough co-ordination between the P.R.D. on the one hand and the Development and Panchayati Raj Organisations on the other. The District Organiser, Block Organiser, and Dalpatis of the P.R.D. are working under the administrative control of the corresponding office-bearers of the Development Deptt. and the Panchayati Raj bodies at the respective levels. Selection of Dalpatis and Halqa Sardars at the Panchayat and Nyaya Panchayat levels has been done by committees consisting of representatives of the Panchayati Raj bodies and development officials. For the purpose of co-ordination and day-to-day supervision of the working of Village Volunteer Force, committees have been set up at the Panchayat, Block and District levels consisting of members drawn from all the three Departments. This complete co-ordination between the P.R.D. and the Development Department at all stages down to the ground level, has been one of the major factors contributing to the success of the programme.

It will thus be seen that the Village Volunteer Force in U.P. has got all the prerequisites that make for success,—a well-knit organisation devoted to the selfless service of the country, bound by a sense of duty and discipline; buttressed by a suitable legislative measure; thorough co-ordination between the Departments concerned and above all, a large number of selfless and dedicated workers. One may expect heartening results to follow as soon as the Force starts operating on the ground in the near future.

FROM THE CHOWPAL

RAM KISHAN : Sarpanch ji, we heard on the radio that our Government has accepted the Colombo proposals and that we are ready to negotiate with the Chinese provided they also accept the proposals *in toto*.

SARPANCH : Yes. Our Government has always been wedded to the policy of peace. We fought back only when the Chinese attacked our country. If now they realise their mistake and are going back, why should we obstruct them ?

RAM KISHAN : But have they really vacated all the area they had grabbed since they first launched their massive attack on 8th September ?

SARPANCH : Yes. They have virtually done so. In NEFA, there are two or three posts like Dhola and Longju about which there is dispute which will be settled during negotiations. In Ladakh, they will have to vacate a large area. To all intents and purposes, this will take them to the 8th September line.

RAM KISHAN : But not exactly the 8th September line ?

SARPANCH : I am saying so because at some places, they will be far behind the 8th September line while at others, they will be ahead of it. But on the whole, they will be surrendering as much area as they had conquered since 8th September. The vacated area will have equal number of civil posts belonging to the two countries. This will serve as a corridor separating the armies of the two countries.

RAM KISHAN : In view of the impending settlement between China and ourselves, need we intensify our defence efforts even now ?

SARPANCH : Why Not ? In the first place, the talks will be held only if the Chinese fully accept the Colombo proposals. Who can say what the outcome of the talks would be ? Granting that even if the issue is settled amicably can we trust them any longer ? What is the guarantee that they will not attack us again ? The greatest lesson that we may draw from the recent happenings is that we must be ever fully prepared, militarily as well as economically to meet a sudden attack on our country.

RAM KISHAN : I follow that. But please tell me what should I do to help the defence effort ? I am past 45 years and am too old to join the army.

SARPANCH : Men like you can help the defence effort best by producing as much food grains as possible. Food is only next in importance to the weapons in winning a war. There is a saying that the army advances on its stomach. If we can produce enough to feed our Jawans as well as the civilians, we would have done our duty. You are then as good a soldier as the one fighting on the front.

RAM KISHAN : Yes; I agree. But tell me how best can I serve to further that end?

SARPANCH : You can do so by joining the Task Force for Production being raised in our village as part of the Village Volunteer Force.

RAM KISHAN : What shall I be required to do if I join this Force ?

SARPANCH : The first and foremost thing that you have to do is to be a model farmer yourself, which I am sure, you already are. You have been adopting improved seeds, fertilisers, green manure and the like for purposes of better cultivation.

RAM KISHAN : I have been trying to do that for the last four or five years ever since the Community Development Programme came into existence. The yield of my crops has gone up by about 25 per cent.

SARPANCH : That's good. But it can be improved upon still further. The aim should be to increase the yield by 50% at least, if not more.

RAM KISHAN : My problem is the four-acre plot of dry land where there is no provision of irrigation water.

SARPANCH : We will be getting electricity in one or two years. You may then have a pumping set to draw up the water from low level. But till then you may try the dry farming techniques such as bunding etc.

RAM KISHAN : Yes. I will do that. But what will I do by joining the Task Force ?

SARPANCH : You know we have decided to build an earthen dam on the slope of the hillock, to store rain water for future use.

RAM KISHAN : Yes.

SARPANCH : It is proposed to utilise the voluntary labour deposited in the Defence Labour Bank for building this dam. If you along with some other members of the Task Force could undertake organising the work on this project, you will be doing a great service to the village as well as to the nation.

RAM KISHAN : I agree to undertake this responsibility. Are the members of the Task Force required to do any other job ?

SARPANCH : Yes. Projects of community benefit would be taken up only once in a while. But you will have some day-to-day responsibilities also. You will be required to look after, say ten farmer families and to help them achieve their optimum agricultural output. This you can do much in the same way as you are doing for yourself.

RAM KISHAN : That means I shall get them interested in improved farming practices.

SARPANCH : Yes. Your own example will be before them to follow. You may also take the assistance of the Gram Sevak and the Extension Officers in this.

RAM KISHAN : But what shall I do if they need loans, other supplies and equipment to improve their agricultural output ?

SARPANCH : You will assist them in getting the loans and supplies from the concerned departments. That constitutes an important part of your duty. On occasions when Kharif and Rabi campaigns or other similar campaigns are to be organised on a village basis, you will be responsible for the part that these ten families would play in the furtherance of the campaign.

RAM KISHAN: But, Sarpanch ji, that was the sort of work that our Gram Sahayak, Ram Jiwan used to do previously.

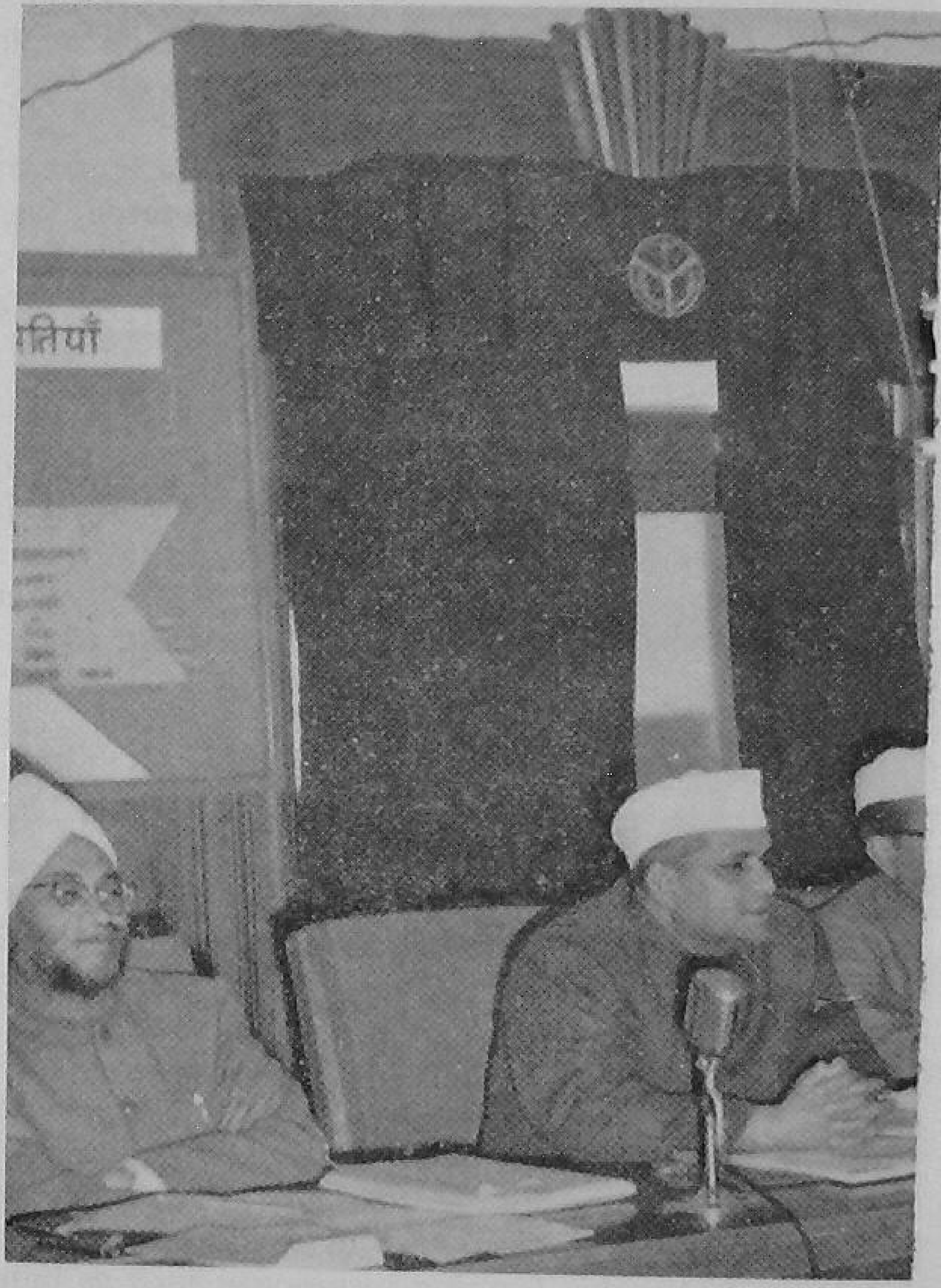
SARPANCH : Yes. In order to reach all the farmer families in the village, we need at least 15 Gram Sahayaks. That is why unless each member of the Task Force for Production considers himself to be a Gram Sahayak, we may not be able to achieve the target of additional food production of ten tons that we have placed for the village as a whole in pursuance of our defence efforts.

RAM KISHAN : I understand it fully now. I will do my best to serve the village as well as the nation by becoming a member of the Task Force for Production.

ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF STA

(By Our cor

THE ALL INDIA Conference of State Ministers of Co-operation was held at Lucknow on February 11 and 12. This was preceded by the two-day Conference of Registrars of Co-operative Societies. Some important decisions were taken in this Conference, which in the words of the Minister Shri S. K. Dey, "has given a kick off" to the Co-operative movement".



Shri S. K. Dey, Minister of Community Development
of State Ministers of Co-operation he

SOME PLAIN-SPEAKING

Addressing the Conference, Shri Dey said that as far as the Co-operative movement was concerned the enemy from within was as dangerous as the enemy from without, for the difficulties in this field were ideological, political, social and temperamental pressures, not so much the lack of adequate machinery or finance. He did some plain-speaking when he pointed out how the distortion of national policy took place at the level of lower functionaries, which held up implementation in spite of universal agreement on principles. While it was the national policy to link short, medium and long term credit given by primary co-operatives for agricultural production, and while it was recognised that both the needs of production and social justice demanded that the weaker sections of the community should increasingly benefit from the provisions of credit, the organisation of joint farming co-operatives was being held up due to pressure from vested interests, both official and non-official. Shri Dey affirmed that pilot projects in the field had proved outstandingly successful and had been studied in detail by several teams of Members of Parliament. He pointed out that the growth of labour co-operatives was similarly being held up due to pressure from private contractors and low-grade Public Works Department employees. While the national policy was to extend the co-operation from primary production to processing and marketing, even the emergence of small co-operative units for building, oil crushing, decortication of groundnut etc. was being stifled by this type of pressure.

Shri Dey emphasised that the emergence of a strong co-operative sector in-between the public sector and the private sector, was absolutely essential for a balanced economy and for taking the country to its declared goal of a socialist pattern.

SPECIAL PRICE FLUCTUATION FUND

There was general agreement at the Conference on the suggestion for the creation of a Special Price Fluctuation Fund

TE MINISTERS OF CO-OPERATION

respondent)

and Co-operation addressing the All India Conference ld at Lucknow on February 11, 1963

for helping co-operative marketing societies to make outright purchases of agricultural produce. But the proportion of the losses incurred, to be shared between the Fund and the normal profits of the societies, as also the ratio of Central and State contribution to the Fund would be decided after further consideration.

The Conference noted with concern that the bulk of accommodation and the warehouses of the Warehousing Corporation was taken up by private traders and it was agreed that ways should be found for enabling the co-operatives to make steadily increasing utilisation of this storage facility.

REVITALISATION OF CO-OPERATIVES

The Conference reviewed the progress made in the scheme to revitalise primary agricultural credit societies. There was some discussion on whether organisation of new societies should be kept to the minimum. One suggestion, made by Shri Chaturbhuj Sharma, Uttar Pradesh Co-operation Minister, was that a time-limit should be fixed for all weak societies to come up to a viable standard. After that period, those who do not come up to the requisite level should be liquidated. It was not worthwhile to keep on making experiments with societies which do not show satisfactory results.

Several speakers emphasised the importance of the revitalisation scheme and expressed the view that the scheme should be implemented more systematically and vigorously than has been generally done in the past.

The Conference discussed ways and means of increasing the resources of co-operative institutions. It was agreed that surplus funds of municipalities, educational institutions and local bodies should be more and more invested in co-operative institutions. It was also agreed that a system of compulsory fixed deposits should be introduced at the primary level and that members should be persuaded to deposit every year a fixed amount based either on their borrowings or on their cultivable areas.

CO-OPERATIVE FARMING

During the discussion on co-operative farming, Union Minister for Community Development & Co-operation, Shri S. K. Dey deplored the cuts made by several States in their 1963-64 budgets for co-operation and co-operative farming in particular. He made an appeal that all those concerned with the implementation of the programme

should regard the difficulties in the field as a challenge. He requested the State Governments to start farming co-operatives and settle landless labour on Government lands being opened up for cultivation. He also suggested that co-operative farming should be tried out on an extensive scale in Gramdan areas where the ideological climate in its favour would have already been created.

Shri B. S. Murthy, Union Deputy Minister for Community Development and Co-operation, pointed out that since 20 per cent of the rural population consisted of landless labour and 40 per cent of farmers with small and uneconomic holdings, co-operative farming was the ideal programme for the rehabilitation of the weaker sections. Shri Shriman Narayan, Member, Planning Commission, mentioned, that a special allocation of Rs. one crore was now available for the promotion of co-operatives in Gramdan and Bhoodan areas. Shri Tarlok Singh, Member, Planning Commission, mentioned that pilot projects had been sanctioned in this sphere to gain a fund of experience for helping in the further planning and implementation. The co-operative farm could prove successful only if not only agricultural production but marketing and full employment to the labour force were guaranteed. This involved a co-ordinated planning and development and concerted action by the Departments of Agriculture, Small Industries and Co-operation. Shri Tarlok Singh suggested that a manual on co-operative farming should be prepared to give clear guidance for opening new co-operative farms. It would embody the experiences of the farms which have already been working for some time. Here, he felt, a much closer and more continuous evaluation was also necessary.

LABOUR CONTRACT AND CONSTRUCTION CO-OPERATIVES

The Conference approved the programme for labour contract and construction co-operatives. During the discussion, Ministers from several States spoke on the importance of strengthening the administrative set-up and also the need to build up non-official leadership in running labour co-operatives. The Conference agreed that programmes for the development of labour co-operatives will be taken up in the State plans during 1963-64.

The Minister for Community Development and Co-operation, Shri S. K. Dey said he would consider the question of setting up a labour co-operative advisory board which could guide the development of labour co-operatives.

There was also discussion on how to pool and profit from the many lessons that are emerging from the successful and the unsuccessful co-operatives. One suggestion made was the preparation of case studies of unsuccessful societies through staff and trainees of co-operative training centres. The other point made was that audio-visual media such as films and film-strips should be used for publicising successful co-operatives.

The Conference agreed that means should be found for preventing diversion of resources from co-operation to other heads while permitting appropriate adjustments between different branches of activity falling under the head 'Co-operation'.

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION

During the discussion on co-operative education, Shri S. K. Dey suggested that a quick evaluation of the working of the peripatetic teams for co-operative education should be undertaken. The Deputy Minister for Community Development and Co-operation, Shri S. D. Misra made the plea that all co-operative unions should set apart a financial allocation for co-operative education, and if necessary, the States should undertake legal enactments for this purpose.

The Conference was agreed upon the importance of developing both official and non-official cadres for the promotion of the co-operative movement. Shri V. L. Mehta, Chairman of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, will constitute a one-man committee to study the measures for stabilising the official cadres while the National Co-operative Union will examine the problems connected with the strengthening of the non-official cadres.

(*Continued on page* 16)

Questions and Answers

(Below we give a gist of some of the Questions raised and Answers given in the last Session of the Parliament—**ED.**)

Q. Which State Governments have accepted the suggestion to start 'Defence Labour Banks' in villages ?

A. All the State Governments have agreed to implement the programme.

Q. How has the C.D. Programme been reoriented in view of the national emergency ?

A. In the context of the present emergency the Community Development Programme has been reoriented to achieve a rapid increase in agricultural production. The share of agriculture in new Stage I Blocks has been increased from Rs. 4.5 lakhs to Rs. 5.5 lakhs out of a total schematic provision of Rs. 12 lakhs. In other Blocks, State Governments have been requested to divert funds to the utmost extent possible for agricultural development subject to provision for rural water supply being left undisturbed and facilities already provided and social services already established, being maintained. The extra funds for agricultural development are to be found by effecting savings under non-agricultural and non-industrial programmes such as office expenses, purchase of jeeps and amenities programmes of lower priority.

Q. In what manner and to what extent the Panchayati Raj Institutions have been geared to meet emergency and to stimulate war efforts ?

A. For the total mobilisation of both human and material resources in the rural areas, a scheme for the organisation of a Village Volunteer Force in every village through the countrywide network of Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Co-operative Organisations has been drawn up by the Ministry. The Village Volunteer Force, which will consist of all the able-bodied adults of the village, will have a three-fold programme covering production, mass education and village defence. The responsibility for planning, directing and co-ordinating the programme rests on the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Q. How far have the recommendations contained in the report presented recently by the Study Group of "Adalti Panchayat", been accepted ?

A. The subject of Nyaya Panchayats is in the State field and as such action on almost all the recommendations made in the Report has to be taken by the State Governments. The State Governments of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Delhi have reported that most of the recommendations made in the Report are already incorporated in their Acts governing Nyaya Panchayats. In other States the report is either under consideration or steps are being taken to implement the recommendations.

Q. How is the scheme of Village Volunteer Force and Defence Labour Bank going to help the cause of our national defence ?

A. The scheme has been designed for the total mobilisation of both human and material resources of rural India through the country-wide network of Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Co-operative organisation. The enthusiasm generated in the rural proper will thus be canalised both for defence and the long term objective of economic development. Each Village Volunteer Force will have a three-fold programme—production, mass education and village defence. A strong agricultural base is the first requisite of national defence. The production programme will constitute the core of the work of the Village Volunteer Force and the Defence Labour Bank.

National Debates on Panchayati Raj and Co-operation

(By Our Correspondent)

THE SECOND National Debating contest on Panchayati Raj and Co-operation jointly organised by the Planning Forum of the Delhi University and the Union Ministry of Community Development & Co-operation was held on 1st and 2nd February respectively. The debate on Panchayati Raj was held in the Vivekanand Hall of the Delhi School of Economics and was presided over by Shri Balwantrai Mehta. Speakers from 17 universities (Agra, Andhra, Aligarh, Baroda, Calcutta, Delhi, Gujarat, Jadavpur, Kerala, Lucknow, Marathwada, Osmania, Poona, Rajasthan, Rural Institute (Udaipur), Venkateswara and Utkal) took part in the contest. Each University was represented by two speakers,—one *for* and another *against* the motion. The subject of the debate was: **Panchayati Raj grows to be even more vital if the present emergency is to be met.**

DEBATE ON PANCHAYATI RAJ

The debate was a keenly contested one and the standard was fairly high. The speakers showed sufficient grasp on the subject. Almost all the speakers conceded the importance of Panchayati Raj,—those speaking against the motion conditioned it by saying that it suited normal times only and not an emergency like the present one. Shri M. K. Singh of Delhi University who spoke in favour of the motion got the first prize of Rs. 250. Miss Rajeshwari Loomba of Lucknow University and Miss Surekha Rao of Osmania University jointly won the second prize of Rs. 200. Shri R. J. Bedeker (Poona) and Shri Pradip Bandapadhaya (Calcutta) shared the third prize among themselves. Poona University team represented by Shri S. V. Kanekar and Shri P. G. Bedkar won the scroll for best all round team performance.

IN SUPPORT

The speakers in support of the motion listed the following reasons:

(1) The Chinese attacked India not merely to grab some tracts of our bleak and barren territory in the North, but to demonstrate the superiority of the regimented way of communist society over our democratic way of life. To give up Panchayati Raj which is the broadest base of democracy in our country, is to play into the hands of the enemy by doing exactly what he desires to achieve. In order to thwart Chinese intentions, democracy must be further built up on the firm foundations of Panchayati Raj.

(2) Panchayati Raj is democratic decentralisation, that is, dispersal of duties and obligations on a wider basis. This ensures a more active and widespread participation by the people in the defence efforts such as securing contributions for the National Defence Fund and recruits for the army. The enthusiastic and spontaneous response by the Panchayati Raj bodies all over the country in the present emergency is proof positive of that.

(3) Modern wars are fought not only on the battle fields but on farms and factories as well. The rural masses can be enthused to produce more foodgrains through schemes like Village Volunteer Force and Defence Labour Bank.

(4) Panchayati Raj bodies provide the agencies nearest to our masses. Through them we can reach the people and explain the correct situation of war in order to counteract rumours and to keep their morale high.

(5) The Panchayati Raj institutions can take upon themselves the essential duty of maintaining law and order in the villages and of looking after public utility services such as Railways, Telegraph lines etc. This would leave the Central Government free to devote itself on more urgent tasks connected with defence efforts.

(6) The dispersal of industries is desirable from the point of view of war. During the last World War, even highly industrialised countries like Russia found it necessary to keep their industrial plants scattered in the interior of their vast country. Panchayati Raj helps this process of economic decentralisation.

AGAINST THE MOTION

The speakers against the motion made the following points:

1. Panchayati Raj stands for decentralisation of power, whereas concentration of power is an absolute necessity in times of emergency. Even our Constitution provides for absolute concentration of power in the hands of the Union Government in the event of an emergency. Hence to depend on Panchayati Raj which aims at decentralisation of authority in an emergency is wrong and fraught with dangers.

2. Emergency presupposes that power should be vested in the hands of those who know how to utilise it in the best interests of the country. In Panchayati Raj, powers rest in the hands of the ignorant and illiterate rural folk who can hardly make proper use of their authority even in times of peace, not to talk of an emergency.

3. Panchayati Raj institutions are hot beds of casteism, groupism, factionalism and corruption. They are the seats of inefficiency and delay. The officials and non-officials associated with these institutions seldom co-operate with each other genuinely. So, it is futile to expect them to deliver the goods in times of emergency.

4. The working of Panchayati Raj institutions is too laborious, cumbersome and time-consuming. They suffer from want of adequate technical personnel. One cannot depend upon such a machinery during emergency when every moment is precious for the country.

5. Panchayati Raj institutions are local organisations with local bias. In an emergency everything has to be viewed from a national perspective. Panchayati Raj institutions cannot, therefore, be expected to outgrow their local bias and develop a national perspective overnight.

6. Emergency demands one leader and one nation. Panchayati Raj supports an army of leaders, all pulling their weight in opposite directions.

7. Panchayati Raj has resurrected the old Zamindars in the form of panches and Sarpanches. It thus perpetuates exploitation of the poor people.

BALWANTRAI MEHTA'S SPEECH

Shri Balwantrai Mehta in his concluding speech remarked that five years ago when Panchayati Raj was launched for the first time by Rajasthan, it was considered to be more or less in the nature of an experiment. But, today, he said, it was an established fact. It had spread to nine out of 16 States; the remaining States are also likely to adopt it before long. That proved conclusively, if proof was needed at all that Panchayati Raj was helpful in furthering the developmental efforts. It was meeting the long-felt aspirations of a large number of rural people who had remained backward and had been suppressed for a long time. The worst fears of the critics of the scheme had not come true. On the other hand, he said, the glow of swaraj was now being felt in every village and the people's representatives at the District, Block and Village levels were learning to manage their own affairs. How far

Panchayati Raj had gone to mobilise resources in men and material in the rural areas to meet the national emergency has been amply demonstrated by the large-scale voluntary contributions to the National Defence Fund and other Defence Efforts. Shri Mehta expressed complete faith in the goodness and capacity of the rural people to manage their own affairs. "They are the inheritors of a great cultural heritage and in course of time, they are bound to come into their own", he concluded.

DEBATE ON CO-OPERATION

The debate on Co-operation was held at the Ramjas College Auditorium under the presidentship of Prof. V. K. N. Menon, Director, Indian Institute of Public Administration, Delhi. The subject of debate was: **In the opinion of this House, Consumers' Co-operative is the means to hold the price line of consumers' goods.**

Speakers from Agra, Andhra, Aligarh, Calcutta, Delhi, Gujarat, Jadavpur, Kerala, Osmania, Poona, Rajasthan, Rural Institute (Udaipur), Shri Venkateswar and Utkal Universities, took part in the contest. Rajasthan University team represented by Shri R. S. Chordia and Shri Arjun Rai was awarded the scroll for the best team of performance. Shri R. S. Chordia of Rajasthan University who spoke in favour of the motion was adjudged the best speaker of the debate and was awarded the first prize of Rs. 250. The Second prize of Rs. 200 was jointly won by Shri N. K. Singh of Delhi University and Shri Varma of Osmania University. Kumari Hameeda Hasan Aligarh) and Shri T. Jaganath (Andhra) shared the third prize of Rs. 150. Shri Jaganath donated his share of prize money to the National Defence Fund.

The debate was lively and well-contested. The standard of performance of the speakers was fairly high. It was felt that although the consumers' co-operatives had not acquitted themselves well in the past, they could certainly prove their worth in the present emergency provided certain facilities such as those of housing and supply of goods at ex-mill and wholesale rates could be ensured through apex central stores. Their usefulness in holding the price level was conceded by all the speakers on both sides. But the speakers against the motion maintained that the consumers' co-operatives were *one* of the means and not the *only* means for holding the price line in the country.

FOR THE MOTION

The speakers in favour of the motion, made the following points:

1. Consumers' Co-operatives alone can ensure equitable distribution of consumers' goods, and thus can hold the price line.

2. They can institutionalise trade and thus put a check on private profit motive.

3. Supply of pure and quality goods is possible only through consumers' co-operatives. They check price manipulation and do away with adulteration.

4. Consumers' Co-operatives have proved a success in the States of Madras and Maharashtra. This generates the hope that they can be a success in other States also if pursued with vigour.

5. The consumers' co-operatives being in the distributive trade are in close contact with production units within the co-operative field, and on account of their better bargaining abilities with the production units outside the co-operative fold, can be in a better position to translate price control policies effectively into practice.

6. Private traders try to exploit consumers by taking advantage of scarcity of goods in an emergency. Consumers' co-operatives can best combat this tendency.

AGAINST THE MOTION

The speakers against the motion, made the following points:

1. Consumers' Co-operatives are mere distributive agencies. They do not increase the supply of available goods and hence cannot check the rise in prices which is the result of galloping demand.

(*Continued on page 16*)

FROM THE CENTRE

NATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE FARMING ADVISORY BOARD

Shri S. K. Dey, Union Minister for Community Development and Co-operation, while addressing the first meeting of the reconstituted National Co-operative Farming Advisory Board declared that no more effective way was available in the present context than joint co-operative farming for giving assistance to landless labour and small land-holders in the vast rural areas of our country. He also affirmed that the experience of the last two years had clearly shown that, if party politics was kept out, technical assistance was given and administrative guidance guaranteed by alert co-operative officers, the joint co-operative farming programme could prove enormously successful.

Shri Dey referred also to the many decision taken earlier committing Government to assist the weaker sections of the community. Here, however, the Community Development programme could not be claimed to have succeeded so far. Joint farming could prove an ideal solution especially against the background of the larger trends in the country. There were difficulties in controlling population increase adequately. With the trend towards mechanization and rationalisation in big industry, it was clear that industrialisation could not guarantee full employment. Shri Dey said that he envisaged the joint farm not merely as a unit of agricultural production but as a continuously developing agro-industrial centre in our rural area. For, along with farming and around it, many economic enterprises could be organised on a co-operative basis, like poultry, dairy, fishery, processing of agricultural products and cottage and small-scale industries. Government waste lands could be used for setting landless labour on co-operative farms. But apart from some recent developments in Dandakaranya there was little sign of initiative being taken in this direction. In the circumstances, he said, the National Board should make determined efforts to see the programme through.

* * * *

CO-OPERATIVE FARMING IN NATIONAL EMERGENCY

The Programme of co-operative farming should be stepped up in order to meet the national emergency. One suggestion is that co-operative farming societies should market their agricultural produce through marketing and processing societies. The other is that, as the main purpose of co-operative farming societies is to increase agricultural production, the targets for organisation of these societies in the pilot project and other areas for 1962-63 should be completed as early as possible. Also immediate steps should be taken to make the societies efficient production units.

The Central Government has made these and several other suggestions to the State Governments. Stress has been laid on the raising of vegetables and fruits in large quantities by Co-operative Farms, particularly located near urban areas, industrial townships and cantonments and societies which are conveniently situated in respect of transport and communications. It has been recommended that they should also take up poultry, dairying and pisciculture according to local conditions. Cottage and Village industries should also be taken up.

* * * *

DISTRIBUTION OF IMPROVED SEEDS

Panchayats and Co-operatives all over the country engaged in the distribution of improved and quality seeds are to receive special financial assistance. This will be in the shape of a premium of Rs. 2 per maund. This facility will be available for the remaining period of the Third Plan.

The Government of India has requested the State Governments to ensure that co-operatives are increasingly associated with the distribution of improved seeds.

National Debates on Panchayati Raj & Co-operation

(*Continued from page* 14)

2. The concept of holding the price line through consumers' co-operatives is theoratically unsound and practically futile. Consumers' co-operatives do not hold monopoly of retail or wholesale trade and as such they cannot exercise a determining influence in the matter of price fixation.

3. The present state of consumers' co-operatives in the country is deplorable. Many of them are controlled by self-seeking individuals, and mismanaged. They supply goods of poor quality and the prices charged by them are not lower than the market rates. They also suffer from maladies of red-tapism and bureaucratic functioning in their working.

4. Consumers' Co-operatives flourished in this country during the last world war mainly because of rationing and controls. As soon as the war ended, they collapsed. It is not expected that they will behave better after the present emergency is over.

5. In the present emergency, the urgent need is to conserve the nation's resources for the defence effort. Money should not be wasted in providing doles and subsidies to co-operatives.

ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF STATE MINISTERS OF CO-OPERATION

(*Continued from page* 10)

CONSUMERS' CO-OPERATIVE

On the question of consumers' co-operative, the Conference approved the proposed programme of building up 200 wholesale stores and 4,000 primary stores by the end of 1963-64. It was felt that the programme of consumers' co-operatives should not be conceived only as a temporary measure but should be built up as a permanent and integral part of the co-operative structure. Shri S. D. Misra, Union Deputy Minister for co-operation pointed out that to start with it was desired that 45,000 service co-operatives in the rural areas should undertake the distribution of consumer goods.

LETTER

(*Continued from page 1*)

said than done. This will come about only if there is the proper leadership and the proper atmosphere for it. This is a big 'if'. It will not do to talk vaguely in terms of democratic ideals without having our feet firmly on the ground. Could there be any other short-cut solution to the problem? For example, is it not possible to inculcate a sense of duty and discipline amongst the amorophous mass of volunteers if they are made part of an organisation modelled on semi-military lines? If necessary, this effort may be supported by some legislative measure also. Although, these steps might involve some sort of discipline and compulsion from above, yet that is the price which has to be paid for lack of sufficient civic consciousness. And for that matter, does it become less democratic? If so, how? The organisation will always be working under the over-all control of the Panchayati Raj bodies at various levels. Experience has shown that an organisation like Prantiya Raksha Dal in Uttar Pradesh (an account given elsewhere in this issue) which consists of millions of trained and disciplined volunteers at the ground level, has succeeded in effectively mobilising people's resources in the rural areas.

We would like to know your reactions to these basic issues. If you have got some other solutions to the problem you are requested to share the same with others. The C.D. programme is at present passing through a very crucial period. Therefore, whatever we do or do not do at this stage, is of vital importance. It is hoped each one of us will rise up to the occasion.

Yours sincerely,
Editor

New Delhi.
5-3-1963

TRAINING P. R. D. MEMBERS

No professional acrobats these ! The P.R.D. trainees undergo vigorous physical training in order to keep themselves fit. Malkhamb on delicately poised bottles is an excellent exercise in the traditional Indian style.

Village Volunteer Force of Bowrampet in Hyderabad has started operating on the ground. In the picture above is a section of the Task Force engaged in operating the weeder in a paddy field.

Printed by the Manager, Government of India Press, Faridabad, and published by the Director, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Delhi-6, on behalf of the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation.

Regd. No. D—877.